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Writing 105 is a required freshman level writing and English class. Most students groan and figure they are just going to be required to write a lot of papers and read books and articles like they’ve done all through high school. However writing 105 at Syracuse University is very different from high school English; it is more thought provoking and meaningful. It’s not just about grammar and research papers, it teaches you how to write with feeling and passion as well as how to be articulate, organized, and expressive. Not only does this class teach you how to write in a sophisticated and compelling way it teaches you how to analyze and assess real world situations. You also learn how to evaluate, question, and challenge cultural controversies. In this particular writing class we discussed the issue of disability and people with disabilities. This course really helped me see the world in different more pervasive way. I developed better critical thinking about issues that at first didn’t seem significant. This course also taught me to express my opinion in a fair and eloquent way.

The first half of writing 105 focused on analysis. It taught us how to read against the grain and really interpret what the authors were trying to get across. It digs deeper into the writing and makes you ask questions that don’t seem relevant at first glance. Analysis helps you to find connections that you didn’t know were evident. Being taught about analysis in this writing 105 course has helped me to thoroughly observe and assess real world situations and dilemmas. I have also learned to challenge some of my own beliefs and positions, some to a more balanced perspective.

The second half of this course was designed to teach us about argument. However it wasn’t the basic argument paper with two sides. It pointed out the complexity and gray areas of an argument. I learned how to see the various points of view and connections that aren’t apparent at first. The argument writing we took on exposed us to “hot-button” topics in our culture. That required us to see past the obvious and into the complex ethical, political, and social considerations. We discussed the controversy of disability. This topic made me a lot more aware of my surroundings and position about important aspects of our society. I realized more about my role and influence in society.

Overall writing 105 has improved my ability to write in a professional and collegiate way. It is helping me become a more analytical reader through the exercises and discussions during our class. I can now think more critically about significant social and political aspects of our society and be aware of how they affect my life and how I can affect it. I believe I now feel stronger empathy toward the hardships and tribulations of people with disabilities. This course has both exposed me to and taught me ways to look at important issues in society that affect us all.